

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00
OMB-01 DHA-05 /085 W
-----048471 101601Z /40
R 092149Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6432

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 7468

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB SHUM CI
SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC CHILEAN LABOR LEADERS CALL FOR POLITICAL AND
UNION RIGHTS

REF: A) SANTIAGO 7312, B) SANTIAGO 7356

1. SUMMARY: SPURRED BY A COMBINATION OF LONG SIMMERING
FRUSTRATION AND HOPES ENGENDERED BY PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S
JULY 9 TRANSITION PLAN, A GROUP OF DEMOCRATIC LABOR LEADERS
ISSUED A VERY CRITICAL STATEMENT AND PETITION IN EARLY
SEPTEMBER. GOING BEYOND UNION ISSUES, THEY URGED PROMPT
RESTORATION OF THE RANGE OF CIVIC LIBERTIES. THE GOC,
ALREADY ITCHY AT PUBLIC REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH,
SAW THIS CHALLENGE AS ONE MORE THREAT FROM PRE-COUP LEADER-
SHIP AND PROBABLY PLANS TO STEP UP THE PRESSURE AGAINST THE
GROUP. THE SITUATION SHARPENS THE NEED FOR US TO DEFINE HOW
OUR WELL-KNOWN SYMPATHIES FOR SPECIFIC TRADE UNION RIGHTS
CAN MESH WITH UNIONISTS' INTERESTS IN BORADER POLITICAL
ISSUES, END SUMMARY.

2. IN A STRONG ATTACK ON PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S JULY 9
TRANSITION PLAN, EDUARDO RIOS (PRESIDENT OF THE MARITIME
CONFEDERATION AND LEADER OF THE "DINAMICOS" OR "GROUP OF
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TEN") SAID THAT THOSE PREACHING THE "FAILURE OF DEMOCRACY"
IN CHILE ARE THE SAME PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE
DEMISE OF CERTAIN BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL, DEMOCRATIC
PRINCIPLES. AT A WELL-ATTENDED SEPTEMBER 1 PRESS
CONFERENCE, RIOS DISTRIBUTED A LETTER SENT EACH OF THE
JUNTA MEMBERS CALLING FOR WIDER DEBATE ON CHILE'S FUTURE
GOVERNMENT AND AN ACCELERATION OF THE RETURN TO CIVILIAN

RULE. THE DOCUMENT DESCRIBED UNIONS AS ESSENTIAL INTERMEDIARY INSTITUTIONS THAT COULD PERFORM THEIR FUNCTION ONLY WHEN RIGHTS TO ELECT LEADERS, BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY AND MEET FREELY WERE RESTORED. IT ALSO CALLED FOR ELIMINATION OF EMERGENCY POWERS AND RESTORATION OF GUARANTEES TO FREE SPEECH, ASSEMBLY, ASSOCIATION AND PETITION. 852 SIGNATURES, REPRESENTING 40 FEDERATIONS AND 500 UNIONS, CAME APPENDED TO THE "DINAMICO" STATEMENT.

3. PRO-GOVERNMENT LABOR LEADERS CHARGED THAT THE PETITION AND RIOS' STATEMENT WERE POLITICAL ACTS INTENDED TO EMBARRASS PINOCHET ON THE EVE OF HIS DEPARTURE TO THE UNITED STATES. "EL MERCURIO" SAID THAT THE "DINAMICOS" NO LONGER REPRESENT THE NEW GENERATION OF CHILEAN WORKERS AND CALLED THE DOCUMENT ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF DISCREDITED LEADERS TRYING TO REPLAY THE PAST.

4. AS REPORTED IN REFTELS, THE GOC BANNED A MAJOR GATHERING OF "DINAMICO" SUPPORTERS IN CONCEPCION ON SEPTEMBER 3 AND DETAINED AND QUESTIONED THE AIFLD REPRESENTATIVE IN CONCEPCION FOR THE ABORTED MEETING. ON SEPTEMBER 7 THE CHEF D'CABINET OF THE LABOR MINISTRY HELD AN "INFORMAL" CHAT WITH THE EMBASSY LABOR OFFICER--WHO HE ERRONEOUSLY THOUGHT HAD ALSO BEEN IN CONCEPCION--AND WARNED HIM THAT THERE WAS CONCERN "AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS" OF THE GOC ABOUT THE LABOR OFFICER'S IDENTIFICATION WITH THE DINAMICOS. THE MINISTRY, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE SAID SO FAR HAD DISSUADED "HIGH AUTHORITIES" FROM AIRING THEIR CONCERNS OFFICIALLY, BUT CONCERN WAS GROWING AND A REQUEST FOR HIS WITHDRAWAL MIGHT BE SENT TO THE USG.

5.

5. COMMENT: FIRST DRAFTS OF THE LETTER BEGAN CIRCULATING WITHIN THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN MID-JUNE--A MONTH BEFORE PINOCHET'S SPEECH. ITS HIGH POLITICAL CONTENT STEMMED IN PART FROM THE GROWING FRUSTRATIONS WITHIN THE DINAMICOS THAT PREVIOUS STRESS ON LABOR RIGHTS HAD GOTTEN NOWHERE WITH THE GOC; IN PART IT REFLECTED A CONSENSUS, PARTICULARLY AMONG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC SYMPATHIZERS, THAT LABOR PROVIDED ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING OUTLETS FOR EXPRESSING POLITICAL CONCERNS.

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OMB-01 DHA-05 /085 W
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 7468

6. ALTHOUGH PINOCHET'S JULY 9 TRANSITION SPEECH WAS WIDELY INTERPRETED AS INDICATING A SLIGHT LOOSENING BY THE GOC, AS OF MID-AUGUST DINAMICO LEADER TUCAPEL JIMENEZ STILL BELIEVED THE TONE OF THE LETTER TO BE TOO OVERTLY POLITICAL. HOWEVER, AFTER MEETING WITH VISITING U.S. EXECUTIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL FIGURES JIMENEZ AGREED WITH THE OTHERS THAT MORE AGGRESSIVE ACTION WAS POSSIBLE. THE DINAMICOS SOUGHT AT LEAST 1,000 SIGNATURES, BUT DECIDED TO RE-LEASE THE LETTER SEPTEMBER 1 FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER 11 COUP ANNIVERSARY AND ON THE EVE OF PINOCHET'S DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON.

7. NEITHER THE GOC NOR ITS LABOR AND OTHER SUPPORTERS HAVE FAILED TO NOTICE HOW CLOSELY THE DINAMICOS' OFFENSIVE COINCIDES WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC POLICY. PRESUMABLY THE GOC NOW BELIEVES THAT THE DINAMICOS HAVE SHOWN PUBLICLY THEIR TRUE COLORS, THEREBY STRENGTHENING THE GOC'S HAND. WE EXPECT PRESSURE AGAINST THE DINAMICOS (AND US)--ALREADY PREVASIVE BUT SUBTLE--TO INCREASE.

8. THE SITUATION POINTS UP OUR DELICATE POSITION. WE HAVE ASSOCIATED OURSELVES IN A VARIETY OF WAYS WITH THE
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DINAMICOS' ASPIRATIONS FOR RESTORATION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS. FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, WE HAVE SOUGHT NOT TO IDENTIFY OURSELVES WITH SPECIFIC PROPOSALS REGARDING THE OVERALL TRANSITION PROCESS. BY EXPANDING THEIR DEMANDS, THE DINAMICOS HAVE GONE BAYOND OUR PUBLIC POSITION, YET THEY REMAIN THE ONLY CORE GROUP OF UNIONISTS PRESSURING

FOR THOSE RIGHTS WHICH WE CONSIDER APPROPRIATE FOR OPEN
USG SUPPORT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL LEADERS, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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